

This is it, this is where I show how much progress I have made through the years. I was standing on top of one of the blocks at the University of Delaware's swimming pool, about to swim a 100 meter butterfly for my high school swim team. I had been swimming with the team for four years at this point and they were like family to me. Before the buzzer went off for us to start swimming, I looked around the pool for my friends on the team and I could see them on the side of the pool with my coach getting ready to cheer me on for my event. The official blew his whistle to prepare the swimmers for their commands and the crowd went quiet enough to hear a pin drop in the pool deck. He gave the command "Swimmers, take your mark," and I leaned down and grabbed the block so tight my knuckles turned white. I was so nervous that I would mess this up for both me and my team. I needed to try my hardest and focus the whole way through to make sure I do what I need to do. The buzzer went and I hit the cold water and began swimming harder than I ever have. I had a mental checklist in my head covering what I needed to do: make sure I do my body kicks, take a breath every 3 strokes, keep my head down, etc. And then I was half way down and realizing that I was getting tired and losing my momentum. I needed to get a second wind fast before I messed up and lost the event. I went for a breath and looked up a bit to far and saw two of my friends at the end of the pool, cheering as loud as they could to get me to go faster. And it did exactly what I needed, it got me to finish the event as strong as I could and finished 4th in my heat but 12th in the state against many other swimmers, with many of them being highly trained. As I got out of the pool, I went over to my coaches for them to congratulate me on my great swim and when I got over to my friends they said the same thing and high fived me. When the event was said and done I realized that I had learned a lot from these people; I learned teamwork, respect, and how to learn from other people. If it wasn't for my teammates and what they taught me, I would have never accomplished this. It was one of the most nerve racking moments of my life but with my friends there I was able to finish strong and be a top swimmer of the day. But this won't be the only time my nervousness will be a big thing.

Welp shit, I need to show my Dad my grades for the first semester. We made a deal that he would help pay for college as long as I am passing and I made mistakes. I failed one class and got a D in another so he won't be happy at all with me and neither will my mother. You could tell how nervous I was by how much my hands were shaking and the cold sweat I had on my forehead and it was for good reason. My Dad might take me out of college, or even kick me out of the house. Would he do that, maybe not but still I am in fear of what he is going to say to me. As I enter the room, I knew he had already looked at my grades by the look he gave me. He immediately said in an aggressive voice "Do you like going to school? Do you like your education? Do you try to even pass Adam?" At the assault of questions I stayed silent for a minute while I thought of what I wanted to say. I replied "I like school and I want to be educated. And I tried my hardest to pass my classes, I didn't understand what to do for the one class though." We went back and forth for about 15 minutes, the entire time my nerves were still at their peak and I had to think very hard for even the simplest of answers. This was probably the lowest point of mine education wise and I swore to myself and my parents that I would never do that bad again. I also figured out but didn't tell my dad this, I wanted to have a college degree to show I am educated in an area that can get me a good job and I wanted to be successful. I know that I would now use the help of my friends to pass. If there is something that I need help with, I will ask instead of staying quiet and trying to handle it by myself. This is what I had learned from swimming and I should have continued to do. When me and my Dad finished our conversation he told me to make sure to look for help if I need it. The good thing is though, the next time I felt this nervous was a great day.

It's finally mine. The house that I have been paying for years is going to be paid off when they get this check. It wasn't a massive house, just two floors and two bedrooms but it was perfect for me. It had a

pretty big fenced in back yard that my dog could run around freely in. So while this place isn't a giant mansion, it still was my palace and my home. Oh what a great day that this is, with me not having to worry about the house bills. I think that I might throw a party for this momentous occasion and invite all of my friends over, cook up some barbecue, and get a big fire going for the night. My entire life has lead up to this, with my old friends all the way back from high school coming here on top of the ones I made in college and also work. If it wasn't for all of my friends to help me throughout my life, I couldn't have gotten here. What I have learned throughout my life is to let your friends help you and teach you because they will always be there for you to help. There was a massive sense of accomplishment that I had, making it through college with grades good enough to get a pretty high paying job and getting a house as soon as I could. But as I have said, none of this would have happened if it wasn't for my friends. Around 10 years ago was when I bought the house but I could still feel the butterflies building up in my stomach and reaching all the way up my chest and into my writing arm as I signed my name on that check. It was a glorious feeling to actually own this place. Once I had finished with the check and put it in the mail, I picked up my phone and started dialing. I called every one of the friends I could still contact and were in a reasonable distance. I told them all, "I now own my house so we should all get together like we used to." And because of that, everyone got to hang out again and see how everyone is going in life.